

Rule 33. Interrogatories to Parties**33.01 Availability**

(a) Any party may serve written interrogatories upon any other party. Interrogatories may, without leave of court, be served upon any party after service of the summons and complaint. No party may serve more than a total of 50 interrogatories upon any other party unless permitted to do so by the court upon motion, notice and a showing of good cause. In computing the total number of interrogatories each subdivision of separate questions shall be counted as an interrogatory.

(b) The party upon whom the interrogatories have been served shall serve separate written answers or objections to each interrogatory within 30 days after service of the interrogatories, except that a defendant may serve answers or objections within 45 days after service of summons and complaint upon that defendant. The court, on motion and notice and for good cause shown, may enlarge or shorten the time.

(c) Objections shall state with particularity the grounds for the objection and may be served either as a part of the document containing the answers or separately. The party submitting the interrogatories may move for an order under Rule 37.01 with respect to any objection to or other failure to answer an interrogatory. Answers to interrogatories to which objection has been made shall be deferred until the objections are determined.

(d) Answers to interrogatories shall be stated fully in writing and shall be signed under oath or penalty of perjury by the party served or, if the party served is the state, a corporation, a partnership, or an association, by any officer or managing agent, who shall furnish such information as is available. A party shall restate the interrogatory being answered immediately preceding the answer to that interrogatory.

All answers signed under penalty of perjury must have the signature affixed immediately below a declaration using substantially the following language: "I declare under penalty of perjury that everything I have stated in this document is true and correct." In addition to the signature, the date of signing and the county and state where the document was signed shall be noted on the document.

Without leave of court or written stipulation, any party may serve upon any other party written interrogatories, not exceeding 50 in number including all discrete subparts, to be answered by the party served or, if the party served is a public or private corporation or a partnership or association or governmental agency, by any officer or agent, who shall furnish such information as is available to the party. Leave to serve additional interrogatories shall be granted to the extent consistent with the principles of Rule 26.02(a).

(Amended effective January 1, 1997; amended effective July 1, 2015.)

Advisory Committee Comment - 1996 Amendment

This change retains the existing rule on interrogatories, and does not adopt the 1993 amendment to its federal counterpart. The federal courts adopted in 1993 an express numerical limitation on the number of interrogatories, limiting them to 25. Minnesota took this action to limit discovery in the 1975 amendments to the rules, limiting interrogatories to 50, and this limit has worked well in practice. The committee believes that the other changes in the federal rules are not significant enough in substance to warrant adoption in Minnesota.

The rule, however, is amended in one important way. The existing provision requiring a party receiving objections to interrogatories to move within 15 days to have the objections determined by the court and the waiver of a right to answers if such a motion is not made within the required time has not worked well. There is no reason to require such prompt action, and much to commend

more orderly consideration of the objections. The absolute waiver of the old rule gives way to an explicit right to have the matter resolved by the court, and permits that to be done at any time. This permits the party receiving objections to determine their validity, attempt to resolve any dispute, consider the eventual importance of the information, and possibly to take the matter up with the court in conjunction with other matters. All of these reasons favor a more flexible rule.

Advisory Committee Comments - 2015 Amendments

Rule 33.01 is amended to implement a new statute directing the courts to accept documents without notarization if they are signed under the following language: "I declare under penalty of perjury that everything I have stated in this document is true and correct." Minnesota Statutes, section 358.116 (2014) (codifying Minnesota Laws 2014, chapter 204, section 3). The statute allows the courts to require specifically by rule that notarization is necessary, but the difficulty in accomplishing and documenting notarization for documents that are e-filed and e-served militates against requiring formal notarization. Accordingly, interrogatory answers may be signed by the party under penalty of perjury, so long as the appropriate language is included above the party's signature. The rule also requires inclusion of the date of signing and the county and state where signed to provide information necessary to establish the fact and venue of possible perjury; this information is otherwise provided by notarization. Rule 15 of the Minnesota General Rules of Practice establishes uniform requirements for the formalities of documents signed under penalty of perjury.

33.02 Scope; Use at Trial

Interrogatories may relate to any matters which can be inquired into pursuant to Rule 26.02, and the answers may be used to the extent permitted by the Minnesota Rules of Evidence.

An interrogatory otherwise proper is not necessarily objectionable merely because its answer involves an opinion or contention that relates to fact or the application of law to fact, but the court may order that such an interrogatory need not be answered until after designated discovery has been completed, a pretrial conference has been held, or at another later time.

33.03 Option to Produce Business Records

Where the answer to an interrogatory may be derived or ascertained from the business records, including electronically stored information, of the party upon whom the interrogatory has been served or from an examination, audit, or inspection of such business records, including a compilation, abstract, or summary thereof, and the burden of deriving or ascertaining the answer is substantially the same for the party serving the interrogatory as for the party served, it is a sufficient answer to such interrogatory to specify the records from which the answer may be derived or ascertained and to afford to the party serving the interrogatory reasonable opportunity to examine, audit, or inspect such records and to make copies, compilations, abstracts, or summaries. A specification shall be in sufficient detail as to permit the interrogating party to locate and to identify, as readily as can the party served, the records from which the answer may be ascertained.

(Amended effective July 1, 2007.)

Advisory Committee Comment - 2007 Amendment

The amendment to Rule 33.03 in 2007 is simple but important. The existing rule allows a party to respond to an interrogatory by directing the requesting party to discover the information from designated documents. The amended rule does not change this procedure, but simply allows the responding party to designate electronic records from which the requested information can be obtained.